

How to Form a Beautiful America Club

TO DO the most effective work for the improvement of our American homes and communities, there should be united as well as individual action. To meet together and talk it over will help in many ways. Such meeting and organizing of the good women upon whom this work really depends will give, also, an opportunity to secure the coöperation and the financial assistance of the men who should thus be interested. From such women's organizations have radiated influences leading to the civic and even the political regeneration of great communities.

Let no woman, therefore, who feels the desire to uplift the conditions for beauty and healthfulness about her own home refrain from an attempt, at least, to form an organization among others who may easily be interested, even if but half a dozen be gathered together for the start. The plan which follows is intended to be flexible, and may be modified to suit all conditions.

The local organization under this plan is entitled to secure information and sympathetic assistance from the national body which is the exponent of a beautiful America—the American League for Civic Improvement. The women of any community who band themselves together in a Beautiful America Club may thus feel themselves a part of the great national movement which eventually will make our great country as beautiful and wholesome as it is already progressive and important in the world's industries, arts and sciences.

The following suggestions may be helpful to the earnest woman who feels moved to this great philanthropic and righteous work.

1. Read the following plan, or "Constitution," carefully, and then write down the names of friends and acquaintances whom you think you can

interest. Note especially those who have already done something in the way of improvement about their own homes.

2. Send to each name on your list a simple invitation to meet at a convenient time and place—your own home, the church parlor, or any place that seems suitable. The invitation might read:

My dear Mrs. _____

I know you are interested in the improvement of our home and community surroundings. In order that the advantages of consultation and united action may be had, it has been deemed wise to attempt the formation of a "Beautiful America Club," through which it is hoped to accomplish results of value to all. Will you do me the kindness of meeting for consultation at _____ o'clock, on _____, 1904, in _____? Please bring with you any other women whom you know to be interested. Yours for Beautiful America,

I am sure most women who read this can write a better invitation! The essential points are to make it tactful and definite—don't omit the time and place!

3. Don't rest on the written invitation; see your friends, and interest them by that personal show of enthusiasm which is so great a force among American women. Think over the proper persons for officers. The President needs to be a tactful woman with some executive ability, and the two Secretaries should have that exactness and fondness for system which will keep the organization running smoothly.

4. When your friends have gathered, state briefly the idea which has caused you to act. It will be best to elect a temporary presiding officer and a secretary, when the organization has been determined upon, and then read over the constitution that follows. It may be wise to defer the election of officers for the first year to a subsequent meeting, the temporary officers carrying over until then. A committee to draft a constitution should be appointed, however, to report at the next meeting, and this committee can modify the form given in this leaflet to suit the local conditions. It would be wise, also, to appoint some one to prepare a brief programme for the next meeting; for, in order to maintain interest, something fresh and to the point must be presented continually. At first, emphasis should be placed upon the necessity for work about the individual home. Get some woman who has an attractive dooryard to tell about it. Later, instances

of the value of work by united action can be found and told, to solidify and encourage your organization.

5. Of course you will arrange to have all who agree to the formation of the Club also to agree to secure the interest of others, and to ask their attendance at the next meeting. If carefully managed, each successive meeting ought to show a large increase in membership.

6. In planning the Constitution, do not get the dues too high. Even fifty cents or one dollar per year will do, and a very respectable sum may be placed in your treasury from this source. A careful canvass of the men who can be interested to become sustaining members ought to provide ample funds. It is almost certain that men won't start this grand work, but they will more certainly sustain it if properly approached.

7. One of the best ways to arouse a community is by means of an improvement address, illustrated with lantern slides. When the time seems ripe for this, write to the American League for Civic Improvement, in care of The Ladies' Home Journal, for dates, terms and other information on this point. Through its section councils and its affiliations, many subjects of interest can be pictorially presented.

8. Don't be discouraged if the movement seems to lag at times! All such unselfish and philanthropic ideas are subject to ebb and flow, but the flood tide is higher each time, when the courage of the good women is maintained. I remember the president of a woman's club devoted to civic work telling me one day that her work was a failure, and that she was discouraged. Within one week I was able to point out to her a superb result of the earnest work of her Club, and to outline many other important results, in the attainment of which the women of it had been a great factor.

9. By all means, and promptly upon organization, affiliate your club with the American League for Civic Improvement. The fee is very small, and the benefits of association and fellowship are great. America would never have been freed from the yoke of foolish George III if each community had fought alone; and America will not be freed from the domination of dirt, disorder and ugliness without united action. Let us start together in this great work!

J. HORACE MCFARLAND.

Proposed Form of Constitution for a Beautiful America Club

ARTICLE I—NAME

The name of this Association shall be the Beautiful America Club
of_____.

ARTICLE II—PURPOSES

The purposes of this Club shall be:

First.—To associate persons, particularly women, who are interested in restoring America to its naturally beautiful condition.

Second.—To bring about such action on the part of its members and others whom they can influence as will result in cleanliness and sightliness about their own home grounds and surroundings, however humble.

Third.—To promote, by every possible action and influence, the establishment of sanitary and beautiful conditions in and about the community, and along the highways approaching it.

Fourth.—To encourage the establishment and maintenance of public parks, reservations, park-drives, open squares, playgrounds and baths, by which the people may have proper facilities for recreation and pleasure, amid conditions as nearly resembling those of nature as possible.

Fifth.—To create and foster an interest in the planting and preservation of native American hardy trees, vines and shrubs for the beautifying of the home, the highways and the parks of our community; and to advocate such laws and regulations as will prevent the mutilation or improper removal and will guard the trimming of trees that are on or near the public highways, or in view from any park or other place of public recreation.

Sixth.—To work for the intelligent improvement of conditions in and

about the public school-houses of our community and neighborhood, to the end that our children may be educated amid such surroundings as will advance the rising generation in respect to the appreciation and use of the beautiful and cleanly surroundings of the home and community to which Americans are by right entitled.

Seventh. — To endeavor by every honorable means to cause the permanent removal of unsightly advertising signs and billboards, especially about public parks, playgrounds or parkways ; and, where removal is impracticable, to work for such uniform legal regulations as shall make necessary signs and advertisements as inoffensive as possible to a proper sense of public beauty.

Eighth. — To coöperate with other organizations working toward the same end, and to affiliate for the benefit of all concerned with the national organization of betterment known as the American League for Civic Improvement.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERS

There shall be two classes of membership in this Club — ACTIVE and SUSTAINING.

Any person residing in or near _____ may become an ACTIVE member of this Club, if approved by the Executive Committee, upon subscribing to this Constitution in a book kept by the Recording Secretary for that purpose, and paying the dues for the current year.

Applications for Active membership shall be referred to the Executive Committee, which may approve at its next meeting by a majority vote ; and upon such approval, the Recording Secretary shall send a written notification to the applicant, who, after the signature and payment above provided for, shall be considered a member.

SUSTAINING members shall be those who, upon nomination by any Active member and approval by the Executive Committee, are willing to pay the yearly dues hereafter prescribed, and thus assist the purposes of the Club. They are entitled to be present without voting at any meeting of the Club, and to receive its publications.

As a recognition of regular attendance, it shall be the rule that any Active member who shall have attended all the regular meetings of the Club for one year shall have her dues for the next year remitted.

ARTICLE IV—OFFICERS

The officers of this Club shall be a President, two section Vice-Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary and a Treasurer,* who shall severally discharge the duties usually appertaining to their respective offices or described hereafter. These officers shall be chosen by ballot at the Annual Meeting to be held on such day in the month of_____ as the Executive Committee shall appoint; and the officers shall serve for one year, or until their successors are elected.

The Section Vice-Presidents shall act as executive officers of the two Sections hereafter provided for, reporting to the Executive Committee or to the Club, and certifying to the Recording Secretary any action taken for presentation with the minutes at the next regular meeting of the Club.†

ARTICLE V—SECTIONS AND COMMITTEES

For purposes of efficient work, the active membership of the Club shall be divided into two Sections, by voluntary choice or by lot; but the membership by choice shall not be permitted to separate into one Section more than three-fifths of the total membership of the Club.

The HOME SECTION shall be concerned particularly with the improvement and beautifying of the home and its surroundings.

The COMMUNITY SECTION shall take up the public work of the Club, relating to highways, parks, school-grounds, etc.‡

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE shall consist of five members, including the President and the two Section Vice-Presidents, together with two members (one from each section) to be appointed by the President. The Recording Secretary shall act as secretary for the Executive Committee, without voting.

The Executive Committee shall have the general management of the work of the Club, and shall direct the expenditure of its funds, but shall incur no liability in its name exceeding the amount of cash actually in the hands of the Treasurer.

* In a small Club, but one Vice-President may be needed, and the organization may be further simplified by electing but one Secretary, who may also act as Treasurer.

† Omit this provision in the simplest form of organization.

‡ The whole section division may be omitted.

A report of the work of the Executive Committee shall be presented at each meeting of the Club.

The MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE shall consist of three members, to be appointed by the President. It shall give attention to the securing of members for the Club, and shall especially solicit sustaining memberships.*

The PROGRAMME COMMITTEE, which shall include the Corresponding Secretary and two members (one from each section) appointed by the President, shall prepare, in consultation with the Executive Committee, a brief programme for each regular meeting of the Club, in order to further its work, and shall from time to time arrange for public meetings, to be addressed by such persons as may be known to be interested in and informed upon the object for which the Club is established.

The PUBLICITY COMMITTEE shall consist of three members, to be appointed by the President. It shall be charged with the work of securing the coöperation of the newspapers, periodicals and clergy of the vicinity in furthering the objects of the Club, and shall endeavor to obtain, prepare and submit regularly for publication such matter as will aid in this object.

ARTICLE VI—DUES

The Annual Dues from each Active Member shall be_____, which sum shall be payable in advance for the current fiscal year of the Club, which shall end _____. In accordance with Article III, this payment may be remitted for regular attendance.

The Annual Dues from each Sustaining Member shall be_____.

The dues shall be paid to the Treasury either directly or through any member of the Club, and it shall be the duty of the Treasurer to send a bill for dues to every member, either Active or Sustaining, at the beginning of each fiscal year, returning a receipt to all who pay. *Provided*, that when the Recording Secretary shall advise the Treasurer of the names of those entitled to have their dues remitted in accordance with Article III, the Treasurer shall send a notice of the fact, instead of a bill.

The membership of any member may be declared forfeited by the Executive Committee for the non-payment of dues after six months' previous demand has been made.

* This committee and the two following committees may be omitted, if desired.

ARTICLE VII—MEETINGS

The Annual Meeting of the Club shall be held at such time in the month of _____ as shall be appointed by the Executive Committee, which shall also, at a previous regular meeting of the Club, provide for nominations to be made for officers for the ensuing year, such nominations to be voted upon at the Annual Meeting.

Regular meetings of the Club shall be held the _____ in each month. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee, all members being notified by mail or otherwise, at least twenty-four hours in advance. Nine members shall constitute a quorum.

The Sections shall also meet monthly, at such times as they may arrange, not in conflict with the meetings of the entire Club.

Public meetings to further the objects of the Club may be held as shall be arranged by the Programme and Executive Committees in conjunction.

ARTICLE VIII — AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Club by a vote of three-fourths of the members present, provided the amendment proposed shall have been passed upon by the Executive Committee and presented at a regular meeting of the Club at least one month in advance of the meeting at which a vote is to be taken.

ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR REGULAR MEETINGS

Roll-call.

Reading of Minutes.

Reports of Officers.

Reports of Committees.

Unfinished Business.

New Business.



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